

STREETVIBES \$1

Jan. 15 - 31, 2010 • Advocating Justice, Building Community • Issue 169

Set Afire, Homeless Man Feels Burned by Police

Says skeptical detective accuses him of lying

By GREGORY FLANNERY
EDITOR

You can't blame people who live on the streets for being less than comfortable with law enforcement; some of their experiences with police officers have been less than pleasant. Thus when George Smock was set on fire during the night of Dec. 27, 2009, he didn't call police.

"I didn't fill out a police report that night, which I should have done, but I've got to live down here," he says. "I don't want to be made out as a snitch."

"They attacked Mr. Smock simply because he is homeless. They believed that, because Mr. Smock is homeless, he is not human and therefore they could viciously attack him and possibly murder him."
- Josh Spring

The next day, when Smock saw the Rev. Fred Cook, the minister called police. Smock told the officer that he didn't want to pursue the matter. When Smock lived in a camp along the Ohio River a few years ago, his camp mate was killed. Because the perpetrator has never been caught, Smock says, he had little hope that his assault would be treated as important.

"My friend - they called him Stringbean - got beat to death," Smock says. "Nothing ever came of that. They're going to make me a priority?"

When Josh Spring, executive director of the Greater



George Smock says four youths set him on fire Dec. 27. Photo by Gregory Flannery.

Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless, heard about the attack on Smock, he urged Smock to cooperate with police.

"I told him that the people who set him on fire might try

to do it to one of his friends," Spring says.

That argument convinced Smock.

But now he's having second thoughts.

'Trying to survive'

The night of Dec. 27, Smock was at the corner of Main and Court streets, near the Ham-

See **Burned**, p. 4

Residents Only: New Policy at the Drop Inn Center

Shelter restructures, emphasizes helping homeless people

By JEREMY FLANNERY
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The general public may no longer stop by for a meal, relax and watch television at the Drop Inn Center.

Since its founding until recently, anyone could go to the homeless shelter. People who are unemployed or mentally ill were welcome, whether homeless or not.

The change in policy is part of a restructuring meant to focus the Drop Inn Center's resources on meeting the needs of homeless people, according to Executive Director Pat Clifford.

"Residents-only is the biggest policy change," he says.

"Services once provided to the general community are now restricted to residents. In terms of our funding and making sure the homeless get what they need, we want to be clear that that is our main goal - to help them find permanent housing."

The Drop Inn Center reorganized its programming last July.

When people arrive at the center, placement specialists now meet with them to evaluate their needs beyond immediate shelter so they can find and maintain permanent housing, Clifford says. The majority of people who go to the Drop Inn Center



Pat Clifford, Drop Inn Center executive director. Photo by Andrew Anderson.

See **Policy**, p. 11

Read the
Streetvibes blog
for stories between
issues at
<http://streetvibes.wordpress.com>
Follow us on Twitter
(StreetvibesNews)
and
Facebook
(StreetvibesCincinnati)
E-mail us at
streetvibes2@yahoo.com

By The Numbers 18 billion

The quantity of toxic wastewater, measured in gallons, that Chevron Corp. has allegedly dumped in the Amazon forest (see page 5).

25

The percentage of Cincinnatians who fall under the federal poverty level (see page 7).

96-1

The vote in the U.S. Senate to subsidize airlines after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks (see page 9).

222

The number of beds at the Drop Inn Center (see page 1).

50

The number of years the United States has made progress in racial equality (see page 10).

13

The age at which Mark Schmieder was hit with a hose by a priest (see page 3).

56-55-1

The Bengals' record under Coach Marvin Lewis (see page 11).

27th

The night in December on which four youths set George Smock on fire (see page 1).

54,027

The number of copies of Streetvibes sold by vendors in 2009 (see page 12).

\$2,344

The cost of a liquor license for a casino in Ohio (see page 10).

Streetwise

By GREGORY FLANNERY
EDITOR

Dealing Death in Our Names

Aren't we proud, Ohioans? Having made national headlines by botching yet another execution last September – the governor called it off after state guards labored for two hours to kill a man, repeatedly jabbing him with needles – we succeeded Jan. 7 in **poisoning another condemned man** in just nine minutes. The new execution protocol, used to kill 37-year-old Vernon Smith, disproved the conservative hypothesis that government can do nothing efficiently. In this time of state budgets, isn't it comforting to know that Ohio can at least kill well?

Put aside, if you must, the moral question of whether the state ought to be involved in the business of dealing death. Another problem is the ultimate punishment is applied when ultimate certainty is not possible. Consider the case of Kevin Keith, who has been caged on Ohio's Death Row for 15 years. Last month the Ohio Supreme Court declined his motion to present new evidence of his innocence. Keith was convicted of killing three people in Bucyrus, Ohio, in 1994. But the case against him is deeply flawed, according to his attorney, Assistant State Public Defender Rachel Troutman.

"We are deeply troubled by the Ohio Supreme Court's failure to allow Kevin Keith to present newly discovered evidence that overwhelmingly proves his innocence and identifies the true perpetrator," Troutman says. "The Supreme Court's denial means that no jury will ever hear that the state of Ohio failed to disclose evidence implicating the person who committed the crime for which Kevin stands to be executed. Now, instead of getting the new trial he is constitutionally entitled to, an **innocent man faces execution**."

"Kevin has maintained his innocence from the time of his wrongful arrest and conviction and throughout the 15 years he has sat on Ohio's Death Row. He has an alibi for the time of the shootings supported by four witnesses. There is no forensic evidence that links Kevin to the crime. As newly discovered evidence shows, the state suppressed evidence identifying the true perpetrator and fabricated evidence in an attempt to bolster the legitimacy of the tainted eye-witness identification used to wrongfully convict him. The execution of an innocent person, especially one who has not been given a fair hearing, is the gravest injustice that no Ohioan can support. We appeal to the state of Ohio to prevent the execution of an innocent man."

Search Warrants Needed for Cell Phones

The state's high court did issue one recent decision that deserves credit. It ruled last month that law enforcement must have a warrant in order to search the contents of a suspect's cell phone seized during an arrest. The decision – the first time a state supreme court in the United States has ruled that warrants are needed to search cell phones – applies constitutional principles to modern technology, according to Carrie Davis, staff counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio.

"Even with changes in technology, we **do not sacrifice our core civil liberties**," she says. "Oftentimes the law fails to keep up with the fast pace of technology, but this decision lays the groundwork for greater privacy protections as the digital age advances."

Kindness Unbowed by Cold or by Nazis

Kindness to homeless people is always to be noted and celebrated, especially given the brutality that they so often experience (see "Set Afire," page 1.) The arctic blast that has frozen much of the nation led the Cincinnati Health Dept. to open the city's Winter Shelter for 11 of the first 12 nights of the new year. This prompted people in the community to **offer food, clothing, blankets** and other donations, according to Rocky Merz, spokesman for the health department. Unfortunately, however, the shelter isn't able to handle the donations, he says. People who wish to donate items to help homeless people can call Josh Spring, executive director of the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless, at 513-421-7803, ext. 13.

The Winter Shelter, housed at the Over-the-Rhine Recreation Center, 1715 Republic St., also opened twice in December. The shelter has averaged 109 persons per night. Anyone – not just homeless people – can stay at the Winter Shelter when it opens. The city opens the shelter when the temperature is 10 degrees Fahrenheit or colder.

Kindness of a much higher order lost one of its greatest practitioners this week with the death of Miep Gies at age 100. When the Nazis occupied the Netherlands, Gies **helped shelter Jews** being hunted for slaughter. Her most famous beneficiary was Anne Frank and her family. They were later captured, and Frank died in a concentration camp at age 16. Her diary, preserved by Gies, is perhaps the best known book about the Holocaust, *The Diary of a Young Girl*. University of Cincinnati Professor Steve Sunderland, a contributing writer for *Streetvibes*, knew Gies and counted her a friend.

"Miep and I met during one of my visits to the Netherlands as part of my work with the Anne Frank Foundation," Sunderland says. "She and I shared many talks and tears and an abundance of chocolate. When I first met her, her husband, Jan, was still alive and joined in our discussions of what it was like to feed families in Nazi-occupied Amsterdam. Both were low-key peace activists, not wanting to brag or judge others. But it was clear that they both felt that the number of people involved in the resistance was way too small. I last saw Miep when she visited Cincinnati under the wing of her good friend, Cor Suijk."

Streetvibes is an activist newspaper, advocating justice and building community. *Streetvibes* reports on economic issues, civil rights, the environment, the peace movement, spirituality and the struggle against homelessness and poverty. Distributed by people who are or once were homeless, in exchange for a \$1 donation, *Streetvibes* is published twice a month by the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless.

Address:

117 East 12th Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202
Phone: 513.421.7803 x 12
Fax: 513.421.7813
Email: streetvibes2@yahoo.com
Website: www.cincihomeless.org
Blog: streetvibes.wordpress.com

Streetvibes Staff

Editor

Gregory Flannery

Art Director

Lynne Ausman

Vendor Coordinator

Jeni Jenkins

Contributing Writers

Michelle Dillingham, Samantha Groark, Margo Pierce, Paul Kopp, Jeremy Flannery, Michael Henson, David Heitfield, Kelissa Hieber, Jeni Jenkins, Stephanie Dunlap, Saad Ghosn, Lynne Ausman, Steven Paul Lansky, Larry Gross, Eli Braun

Photography/Artwork

Aimie Willhoite, Lynne Ausman, Jeni Jenkins, Anthony Williams, Bill Haigh, Clarissa Peppers

Proofreaders

Jennifer Blalock
Lynn Baker
Jeremy Flannery

The Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless

is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that works to eradicate homelessness in Cincinnati through coordination of services, public education, grassroots advocacy and *Streetvibes*.

We are members of:



North
American
Street
Newspaper
Association



A Priest to Prisoners and the Poor

A minister who served others



By VICKIE CIMPRICH
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Mark Schmieder's body was not at the front of the middle aisle, head to the altar, and feet to the congregation. However, something was parked out of the way by the back east wall in a pine box. Inside was something long, waxened ice blue. The first thought was, "What is a miraculously semi-preserved relic doing in St. Francis Seraph Church in Over-the Rhine?"

"My God," I said. "Is that Mark?" Maybe it was not embalmed. Some logistic snafu with the authorities had held it up. That would fit with Mark. No myrrh in no Gilead. It had in fact been on ice from Dec. 24 to Jan. 2 so he could die with family in Washington State, and then be with all his loved ones in the Ohio Valley. But everybody enjoyed a photo of him in his teens in the seminary, chubby faced, beardless.

The story of his birth was told. He looked dead at his emergence, and they laid him on a table out of the way so everyone could work on saving his mother's life. When they got her stabilized, somebody noticed that Mark was alive. Cold and unattended for some time, with a broken leg.

One of his many personal conversions came when he remembered having been hit with a hose by a priest when he was about 13. Then he was part of one more fellowship: Survivors of Priest Abuse. All along he has been aiding and abetting survivors of many sorts.

A while back he'd laughed and said maybe nine priests would show up at his funeral. So many turned out they overflowed their assigned seating. The church was packed. Chairmen sang their song around the body during the final commendation. Archbishop Dennis Schnurr was there. The day after *The Enquirer* announced Schnurr's purchase of a really expensive house in Anderson Township, Mark had stormed into the Chancery: *You can't do this*. I joked with Glenn Miller that there might be salvation for Schnurr after all: When the real estate market recovers, Schnurr sells at a big profit and gives the money to the poor.

The past two years Mark canoed in Paddlefest. He'd sold the canoe he'd rescued Gordon Lightfoot in to Ken Palasin, who glided down the Ohio with Vickie Cimprich, next to Mark and Mary Repaske in 2008. Seems Mark was on one of many Canadian rivers when he came upon this dude stuck on a rock. The next Lightfoot concert in Cincinnati, Mark received two tickets.

At least one resident of St. Francis-St. Joseph Catholic Worker House, which Mark had led for some time, was at the reception. This man has lost his family and career to alcoholism. He's working his program now. Likes to read in the house library and work out at the neighborhood gym. He said St. F-St. J was the five-star homeless shelter of Cincinnati. He stayed till the reception was over and worked with Mark's lay Catholic community, Anawim, until all was cleaned up.

These workers operated sort of psychically: no one told anybody what needed to be done; all knew. Judy Tensing had gone out to Washington to be with Mark when he died; the catering group she had helped found served a fine feed for all. Judy worked the whole reception and cleanup.

Mark had pancreatic cancer; so had Cardinal Joseph Bernardin. Mark's was diagnosed about last March, feast of the Annunciation, about nine months before Christmas. Mark is Epiphany's supernova, his colors awhirl in any ether, any's far sight.

The Stable

(For the Rev. Mark Schmieder)

By VICKIE CIMPRICH

The shepherd with the antalgic gait
was the first to arrive.
A swaddling mild autism over all
protected. A young girl
had been left behind
with the flock and the sick man
who was going to die soon.
The shepherd who
loved men held Joseph, each chosen by angels.

One teenager
passed the placenta and slept
well into the next day.

All were strong,
all were bright.

'God's saint in this community'

By JEFF HILLARD
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

On only the second time I ever walked into the Hamilton County Justice Center, about three years ago, as a member of the county's Jail Chaplaincy Team, I met Fr. Mark Schmieder in our chaplain's office on level 3. I had no idea who he was.

He sat at a desk across from Bob Barbara, another long-term on the chaplaincy team and a very close friend of Fr. Mark's. Bob's mission is to supply inmate requests for complimentary reading glasses. Very, very few county jails in the country – if any – allow such a ministry, which made my proximity to these two wise men extremely special.

Bob said, nodding to Fr. Mark, "Jeff, this is the main man."

I think Fr. Mark blushed, and I know he chuckled.

"That's what he thinks," Mark said.

I said, "I've heard about you, Fr. Mark."

He said, "That's not a good sign."

He chuckled some more. That impression immediately stuck: humility, sweet spirit, deflection of any kind of "authority" he might have had, absolute humor and goodwill and encouragement. He encouraged me, gave me a few pointers, what maybe I didn't learn fully in chaplaincy training. He soon put on his fisherman's cap, he gave me a hug, and he and Bob, finished, headed to B&G Restaurant for lunch around the corner.

He was usually always there at the Justice Center on Friday, with Bob, morning until noon. It didn't take me long, either, to fathom his brilliance. How could he run St. Francis-St. Joseph Catholic Worker House, too?

In the times I saw him after that, I realized that he was God's saint in this community in the world. Making calls until the very end of his life, with tired, cracked voice, he was never really tired and he was always the voice of the voiceless.

Man Feels Burned by Police

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ilton County Department of Jobs and Family Services. Four African-American teenagers doused him with charcoal lighter fluid and threw a match on him, he says. His coat lit on fire.

"These four young boys walked up to me," Smock says. "It was dark. They had a square can that you start your charcoal with, and they threw a match at me. My coat caught on fire. They said, 'Now we got you, motherfucker.' Everything happened so fast."

Smock says he had a can of Gatorade and doused the fire. He was uninjured.

Now Smock feels threatened by police investigators.

"They're trying to turn it around," he says. "They said they're going to arrest me for making a false report. The detective said, 'We can't find any residue on the coat.'"

Smock says he took investigators to his current campsite – a location he declines to identify – and turned over the coat.

"I went back and got the coat and gave it to him," he says. "I'm trying to do the right thing here. I was willing to let it go. If I did set myself on fire, why would I take him where the coat was? The coat's been out there for two weeks in the rain and everything else. That's why there's no residue. I'm the victim in this and they're trying to make me out to be the one who did it."

A longtime family friend gave Smock the coat, he says.

"My new Carhartt coat that I got for Christmas – why would I burn my own coat?"

A police investigator told Smock that he suspects Smock ignited a cigarette lighter in the coat pocket, causing it to burn.

"I don't even smoke," Smock says. "I don't have a lighter. I chew tobacco."

Last week Smock might have made his own legal situation – and the investigation of the assault – more complicated. He says that, in his exasperation, he gave a new account of the incident to a detective. Smock says he told a detective that he had been on riverbank and leaned against something that ignited the coat.

"He was browbeating me," Smock says. "I gave in to it."

At this point, however, bristling at the suggestion that he started the fire, Smock says he'll fight in court any charge filed against him.

"I'm not trying to get anything out of this," he says. "They'll never find these guys but I'll be damned if I'm going to be accused of lying about this. I fly a (panhandling) sign. I don't rob anybody. But they want to do this to me. I think it's wrong. I'm just out here trying to survive."

Smock says he doesn't remember the detective's name. Spring says a contact in the police department told him that the detective might be using an investigative technique, testing Smock's ability to withstand cross-examination if the assailants are caught and go to trial.



Fighting hate crimes

Smock says he has long familiarity with discrimination against homeless people. He has been cited in the past for drinking in public, he says.

"I've sat in the Salvation Army lot and watched college students walk up and down the street drinking," he says. "Just because they have money, they're better than me? You've got these people drinking at tailgate parties. It's OK for them to do it. But if I take a 40-ounce (beer) down there, I'm hit in the mouth. It's an old expression: It means I'm screwed."

Smock has agreed to speak at a forum on hate crimes being organized by the Homeless Coalition, according to Spring.

"They attacked Mr. Smock simply because he is homeless," Spring says. "They believed that, because Mr. Smock is homeless, he is not human and therefore they could viciously attack him and possibly murder him. The

Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless (GCCCH) condemns this hate crime and all hate crimes. GCCCH encourages all people who are homeless to be especially cautious, especially at night, and to keep watch for one another."

The workshop/forum on hate crimes will meet from 1:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, Jan. 29. Contact Rob Goeller (robgoeller@cincinnati-homeless.org) at 513-421-7803 x15 for further details. Scheduled speakers include Michael Stoops of the National Coalition for the Homeless and Brian Davis of the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless.

The workshop/forum on hate crimes will meet from 1:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, Jan. 29. Scheduled speakers include Michael Stoops of the National Coalition for the Homeless and Brian Davis of the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless.

Greater Cincinnati Coalition For The Homeless



Streetvibes vendors keep 75% of sales.

Consider helping Streetvibes with our publication costs by making a tax-deductible donation or by purchasing a subscription.

Streetvibes is the activist newspaper, advocating justice, building community. Your gift is tax-deductible and will go to producing the paper every two weeks. Started in 1997, Streetvibes is distributed by homeless and formerly homeless vendors who purchase the paper for 25 cents and sell it for \$1, keeping the 75 cent profit.

Make checks payable to "Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless"

I want to support Streetvibes and the vendors.

☐ \$25

☐ \$50

☐ \$100

☐ \$150

☐ Other \$ _____

Please return your contribution to:
GCCCH

Name: _____

117 E. 12th Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

The Good Justice News of 2009

Progress on workers’ rights and the environment

By **KRISTEN BARKER**
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

We seek to start the new year with a look back at hard-fought victories in 2009, in order to look forward to 2010 with energy and wisdom:

Cadbury goes fair trade

An iconic UK candy company became the first mainstream producer of Fair Trade sweets in July. Cadbury will sell its Fair Trade-certified chocolate bar at no extra cost, a move expected to triple the volume of Fair Trade cocoa sourced from Ghana.

Visit
www.globalexchange.org

Student pressure leads to factory re-opening in Honduras

Congrats to United Students Against Sweatshops for their victory against Russell Athletics, which closed its factory in Honduras after workers there tried to form a union nearly one year ago. Students at 96 universities persuaded their schools to suspend or sever ties with Russell Athletics, a major supplier of college spirit-wear. In late December, Russell announced that it plans to re-open the factory and re-hire all 1,200 workers.

Just say no to bovine growth hormone

In February, Yoplait and Dannon announced they would no longer purchase milk from dairies injecting their cows with Monsanto's controversial genetically engineered synthetic hormone, recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH).

Another Fair Food movement victory!

Coalition of Immokalee Workers and Bon Appétit Management Co. built an innovative new model for fair labor standards in Florida's tomato fields. Bon Appétit Management Company becomes the first food-service company to establish game-changing fair labor requirements that integrate minimum fair wages, worker empowerment stipulations and incentives to growers who exceed minimum requirements of the agreement.

Visit
www.ciw-online.org

The first Latina justice

Sonia Sotomayor became the first Latina and the third female U.S. Supreme Court justice – a historic moment for the country and an especially important moment for Latinos.

Toledo Public Schools ban ASVAB

After four years of organizing efforts led by Learning Not Recruiting, the Toledo School Board, by unanimous vote, passed a revision to its entire policy manual on military recruitment. Toledo has become the first district in the country to ban the Armed Service Vocational Aptitude Battery Test (ASVAB), the military entrance test, from being given in any high school in the district.

Bye bye, missile defense

In September, the Obama administration eradicated Bush-era plans to deploy missile-defense components in Poland and the Czech Republic.

Climate change

Tens of thousands of people from around the world took to the streets of Copenhagen to call for meaningful action to address climate change, despite continuous attempts to squelch it. Inside Copenhagen's meeting halls, indigenous peoples from small island nations and the Himalayas spoke powerfully about their rights and their needs.

Corporations are not people

Visit
www.yes.org

Three towns in Maine – Shapleigh, Newman and Wells – have passed ordinances that strip corporations of the rights of “personhood,” a legal concept that allows companies to claim the same rights as individual citizens.

New coal plants cancelled

According to Green America, the November cancellation of the proposed 960-megawatt coal plant in Meigs County, Ohio, was the 101st new coal plant to be canceled since 2002.

Visit
www.greenamericatoday.org
www.ohiocitizen.org

Kimberly Clark, emerging leader in sustainability

In August, after years of pressure from GreenPeace and others, Kimberly-Clark, the company that makes Kleenex, Scott and Cottonelle, announced a new policy that places it among the industry leaders in sustainability. Kimberly-Clark set a goal of obtaining 100 percent of the wood fiber for its products from environmentally responsible sources. By the end of 2011 the company will no longer use any pulp from the Boreal Forest unless it is Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified. The policy also prevents the company from cutting endangered forests and increases its use of FSC-certified pulp and recycled fiber globally.

Visit
<http://www.kleercut.net/en/>

U.S. commits to limit greenhouse gas emissions

In June, the U.S. House of Representatives’ passed the American Clean Energy and Security Act, which marked the first U.S. national commitment to limiting greenhouse gas emissions.

Tiny town sends multinational packing

A six-year campaign by McCloud, Calif., residents forced Nestle to abandon its plan for a mega water-bottling plant.

Visit
<http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/>

Community garden bonanza in Cleveland

Access to open land in Cleveland has incited a community-garden explosion. By various counts, more than 200 community gardens – neighborhood grow-your-own collaborations – have sprung up on empty lots.

Taking back the land – responding to foreclosures in Miami

A grassroots initiative through the organization Take Back the Land is finding temporary housing for homeless families in Miami, Fla. Homeless families are matched with houses that have been foreclosed on and are owned by the local government or a bank. The hope is that, by allowing homeless families to live in vacant homes, they will be given the opportunity to conserve their resources and find permanent housing of their own.

Most significant conservation victory in 15 years

Two million acres of wildness in nine states will receive new protection under a bill signed into law March 30 by President Obama. The measure has been called the most significant conservation victory in the last 15 years.

Hawaii will be 40 percent powered by renewable energy

The state of Hawaii and Hawaiian electric companies have allied to dramatically expand renewable energy. Their agreement requires that 40 percent of the island be powered by renewables.

Visit
www.yesmagazine.org

A Victory for indigenous Ecuadorians

Ecuadorian indigenous tribes have won a ruling against Chevron Corp., which owns Texaco. Their 16-year-old, \$27.3-billion liability suit concerns Texaco's nearly three decades of activity in the Lago Agria area of the Amazon, during which, plaintiffs say, the company dumped 18 billion gallons of toxic wastewater into the rainforest.

Excerpted from the newsletter of the Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center.

Profs and Prophets of Non-Violence

Laughter is one way to become one

By AIMIE WILLHOITE
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

What is violence? Surprisingly, today most would define violence solely as a physical action or force that causes bodily harm. We cannot ignore evidence, though, that violence is more than just brute force.

Mental, emotional and spiritual violence exist as counterparts to this physical expression. And if we devote more time understanding the complex layers of violence, it will ultimately lead to deeper discussions, which can be dedicated to the idea of non-violence. What is non-violence, and how might we actually be able to practice it within our own lives?

I am a student at Northern Kentucky University (NKU) where I recently finished an intense course, “Prophets of Non-Violence,” taught by Professor Patrick Murphy Welage. I have been a part-time student for many years and I truly feel that no other course has affected me as strongly as this one. The content was gripping and the overall experience life-changing.

At Xavier University and NKU, Welage teaches theology and philosophy with an emphasis on social justice and non-violence. He is also a certified laughter yoga teacher.

We found out what laughter yoga is when one of our classes was turned into a laughter-yoga-body-mind experience. It was definitely awkward at first, forcing ourselves to laugh without any prompting, without any comedy. It was a matter of faking the laughter until it finally became real and natural. By the end of the class, hilarity was echoing from person to person.

The lesson was to use laughter as a practice of non-violence, because laughter is non-political, non-religious, non-racial and non-threatening. Like music and art, laughter is a universal language that can transcend many barriers: language, age, gender, race and social class. It enhances our personal relationships and connections with one another. Laughter can suspend or remove divisions between people, showing a way to a more peaceful existence together.

Welage is the type of teacher who makes things interesting and witty, although his objective through it all is to have his students thoughtfully examine theories and practices associated with violence and non-violence.

We spent a significant amount of time trying to understand apartheid in South Africa. We were inundated with facts about unspeakable acts of oppression, torture and violence perpetrated toward blacks at the hands of a white supremacist government. Many turned a blind eye to what was going on. Apathy is an all too familiar response to horrendous violations against human freedoms.

We read *A Human Being Died That Night: A Story of Forgiveness* by Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela and *Priest and Partisan* by Michael Worsnip, hoping to gain some insight into some of the root causes of this violence in South Africa and how the country would ever recover from it. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was formed so that the country could shift toward truth, reconciliation and most important, forgiveness.

Forgiveness, faith, redemption and spirituality were at the center of many of our discussions. We each had our own unique frame of reference and life experiences to pull from. Our class was made up of Christians from many denominations, Muslims, Buddhists, atheists and agnostics. It was also a sweet mixture of gender, age, race and social class. It was an amazing little community our classroom had turned into.

Over the course of the semester we worked on writing a research-based spiritual autobiography. It was to be a deeply personal account of our own spiritual journey, sharing our own stories of joy, pain,

Apathy is an all too familiar response to horrendous violations against human freedoms.

growth and revelation. Our autobiographies would also be based upon the writings and practices of one of the prophets of non-violence we had learned about. How had our life experiences shaped our views on non-violence? What changes could we make in our lives to soar from theory alone to a daily practice of being peacekeepers?

Each student made a presentation before the class. Nothing could have prepared us for what we were about to share and experience with one another. We each had a story to tell. Our initial reservations about opening our lives to a roomful of strangers were gone. Something had occurred throughout the duration of the semester.

One by one we shared our stories and memories: drug addiction, rape, violence, domestic abuse, alcoholism, loss of loved ones, serious illnesses, child abuse, divorce, affairs, single parents, depression, suicidal thoughts and attempts. It was almost unbelievable, the gravity of what we were doing in this small class setting. Their pain became my pain, and my pain became their pain.

I am convinced that, unless you face the truth, the truth cannot set you free. Facing ourselves takes courage, let alone facing others. Healing and recovery begins with dialogue. I was able to make the correlation between what the professor had been teaching us and what we were doing for one another as a class. In the very speaking of “unspeakable acts,” a person, family, community or nation can begin to heal. Dialogue is purgative medicine for an ailing world.

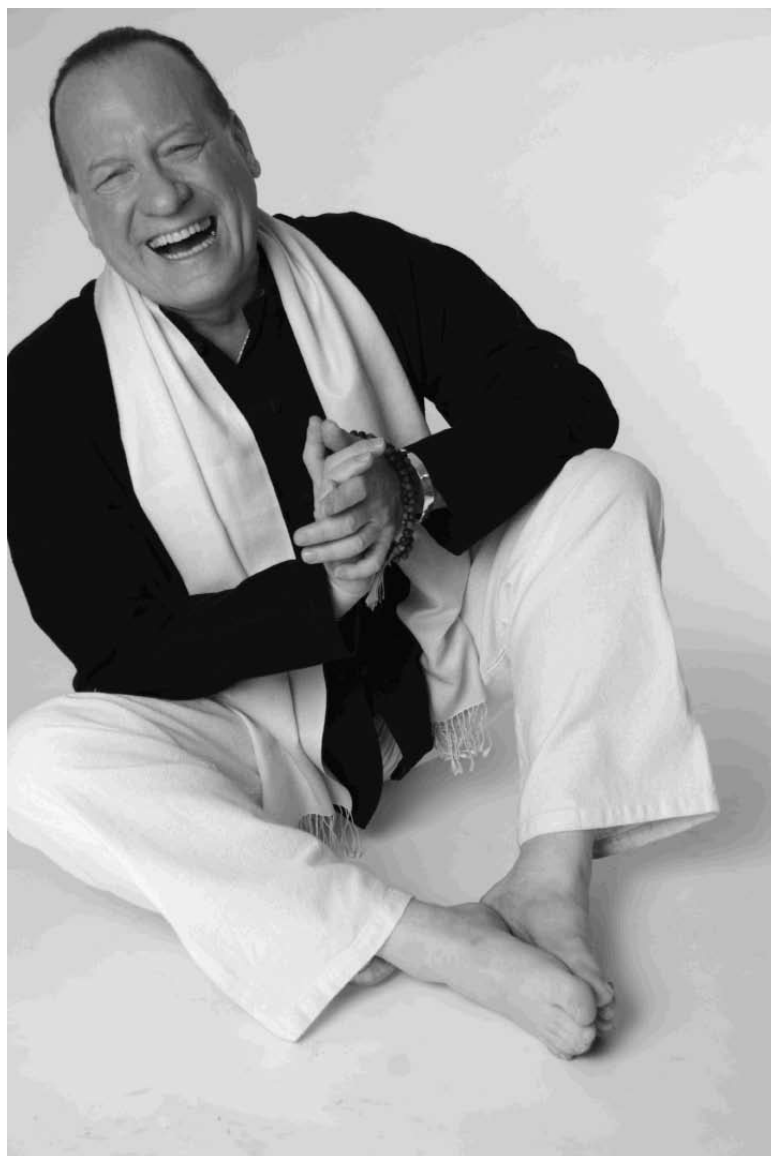
Even if it takes a lifetime, we must encourage one another toward forgiveness when we have been emotionally, spiritually or physically harmed. Pumla Gododo-Madikizela, who described her personal experience with the post-apartheid Truth and Reconciliation Commission, wrote about the effects of forgiveness she witnessed in others.

“Some societies are finding it more constructive to focus on discovering and nurturing the conditions that make forgiveness first conceivable, then ultimately possible,” she wrote.

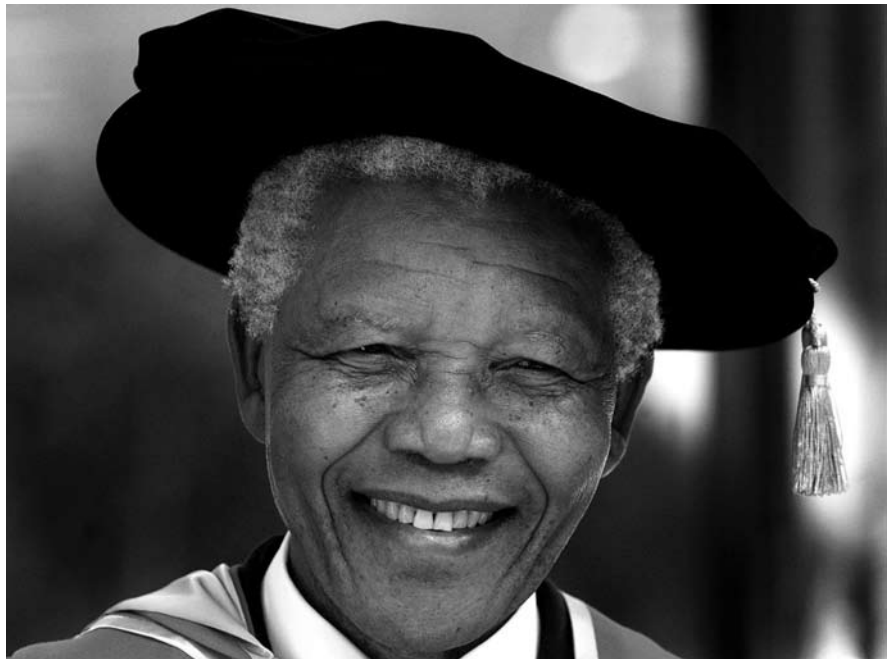
Forgiveness is a form of non-violence. We need to nurture it within our corner of the world.

The final moment of enlightenment came for me as I listened to a young Muslim student discuss what this class had meant to him. He was able to articulate what the majority of us also felt. We were all proud of one another for having the bravery to share our stories. We put ourselves in a very vulnerable position, and yet what we found was that no one judged us or rejected us. We respected one another's individuality. No one's faith, beliefs or race were attacked. We simply listened to one another and learned from one another. We accepted our differences.

One has to wonder how different the world might be if what happened within the classroom could happen outside it. We all have the potential to be prophets – advocates for non-violence.



Patrick Welage teaches laughter yoga and non-violence.
Photo by Aimie Willhoite.



Former South African President Nelson Mandela. REUTERS/David Gray.

Cramped Affordable Housing

Many cannot afford adequate room, subsidies are insufficient

By MICHELLE DILLINGHAM
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

People who live in affordable housing tend to be young families, senior citizens, single parents, people with disabilities, recently unemployed, low- to moderate-income workers and the formerly homeless. This covers, well, just about all of us at one point or another in our lives. There is an additional layer of us who need affordable housing, but who have issues that exclude us from even being *considered* as tenants. These issues include poor credit, conviction record, or eviction history.

Housing is considered “affordable” when total housing costs consume less than 30 percent of a family’s income. In 2009 the federal poverty level for a family of four was an annual income of \$22,050 or less. For this family’s rent to be “affordable,” they will have to find housing that costs no more than \$550 per month, and this includes the cost of utilities. Most landlords now require tenants to pay utilities.

I took a quick glance at the rentals advertised in the local paper under “Three Bedroom Apartments.” I did not find ANY three-bedroom apartments advertised for \$550 or less. There are some two-bedroom apartments for that price, but a two-bedroom apartment is inadequate for almost any combination of a family of four: single mother, a 3-year-old, 5-year-old and a 13-year-old? No, especially given the floor plans of most two-bedroom apartments: not a lot of room. Two parents, a 12-year-old boy, and a 15-year-old girl? Not ideal.

Remember, a full 25 percent of Cincinnatians fall under the federal poverty level. So a full quarter of our city’s residents cannot afford adequate housing, and adequate in this case is simply being large enough to accommodate family size. Overcrowding and doubling-up is all too common.

Since this family cannot afford any of the three-bedroom rentals, there are two choices. The first choice is to seek out housing subsidy programs they can qualify for. They will be told there are none available right now. Their second choice is to take a rental that is inadequate to accommodate their family size, so they will have to hide how many children they have so they won’t be denied housing. This touches on fair housing issues, as landlords cannot legally

restrict the number of people in an apartment to less than two per bedroom, regardless of age or sex.

Below is a list of the affordable housing subsidy programs that exist. At first glance it appears lengthy and seems like a lot of programs. In reality, many are either not being adequately utilized, or they are sorely underfunded for the housing needs that exist in our city.

Each of these subsidies has a set of policies. Policies are similar to laws: They exist because people weren’t doing what was right, so other people made a policy so that people would do the right thing. Therefore social justice is often preceded by a mandate.

There are opportunities for local advocacy for each of these programs to be utilized and supported. When an affordable-housing development is proposed, there are opponents who write letters and testify at City Hall asking city council members not to approve the subsidy. A recent example was the opposition to a Section 202 project (senior housing) planned for College Hill. Neighborhood resistance blocked it. It is crucial that supporters of affordable housing be informed and vocal so that our city’s families will be able to access these subsidies and have a better chance at affordable, accessible and adequate housing.

Primer on housing subsidies

(Excerpted from the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s “Meeting the Housing Needs of Families”)

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG): Created in 1974, the CDBG program passes money to states, some urban counties and cities with populations above 50,000. Municipalities typically use a portion of these funds for housing development – such as home rehabilitation and the acquisition, rehabilitation and resale of vacant properties – and for economic development, including commercial areas.

Section 8: Rental assistance to very-low-income tenants. Section 8 tenants pay up to 30 percent of their incomes for rent; the federal government pays the difference between that and a HUD-deter-



mined fair-market rent charged by the property owner. There are two kinds of Section 8 programs. Housing certificates or vouchers are tied to the tenant, for use wherever the tenant lives. The second type, called Section 8 project-based housing, is tied to the apartment unit, so that anyone who moves there receives the subsidy.

Low Income Housing Tax Credits: In 1986 Congress created this credit, which is now the most important mechanism for promoting the development of affordable rental units. ... Tax-paying developers receive a tax credit for a portion of the costs of developing affordable rental housing.

HOME: HOME funds go to eligible communities for affordable-housing development, including homeownership counseling and local tenant rental assistance.

Empowerment Zones: The federal government designated many low-income areas throughout urban and rural America as empowerment zones, eligible for roughly \$100 million per zone in federal grants and other incentives. Housing is not a central thrust of the Empowerment Zone process—it is fundamentally geared toward business development, job creation and job retention, and often is used for various kinds of commercial and industrial development – but most empowerment zones have some housing elements in their plans.

Section 202: This federal program of financing housing for the elderly was created for non-profit developers. It is a deep source of subsidy, providing capital advances and project-based rental assistance for elderly tenants.

Section 811: Provides both capital advances and project-based rental assistance to persons with disabilities.

HOPE VI: Congress created HOPE VI to revitalize distressed public-housing communities. Any public housing authority (PHA) that operates public housing units is eligible to apply for HOPE VI funds. It encourages PHAs to seek new partnerships with private entities to create mixed-finance and mixed-income affordable housing that is radically different from traditional public housing “projects.”

Continuum of Care Funds: These funds can be used for temporary and permanent housing and for supportive services.

Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG): ESG funds can be used to convert buildings into shelters or to rehabilitate existing shelters. The funds also can be used for homelessness prevention activities, social services and operating costs.

Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS: These funds can be used for a variety of purposes, including acquisition, leasing or rehabilitation of buildings; supportive services; and rental assistance.

Housing Trust Funds: Perhaps the fastest growing new sources of government subsidies are housing trust funds created by local and state governments. These funds take dedicated revenue sources, such as real estate transfer fees, and commit them to subsidize the development of low-income housing.

One way to help advocate for local affordable housing is to join the efforts of Affordable Housing Advocates (AHA). Contact Michelle Dillingham at mdmswls@hotmail.com if you are interested in joining AHA.

A full quarter of our city’s residents cannot afford adequate housing, and adequate in this case is simply being large enough to accommodate family size. Overcrowding and doubling-up is all too common.

If you like what you read, but don’t live in the Cincinnati area, you can subscribe to *Streetvibes*. Call us at 513-421-7803 x 12 to learn more about subscribing to *Streetvibes*.

Veggie Stir-Fry

“Feed Me, Seymour, Feed Me All Night Long”



Photo by Jeni Jenkins.

By JENI JENKINS
STAFF WRITER

This quotation is taken from the 1986 film Little Shop of Horrors, in which a plant keeper must meet the demands of a ravenous plant that feeds on

humans. Instead of plants that feed on people, this column is for people who feed on plants. Sometimes when I get home from a long day at work, the last thing I want to do is go to the grocery store and then spend hours in the

kitchen cooking dinner. This recipe is one that I concocted with things I had in my kitchen when I wasn't feeling Suzie Homemaker-ish. Serving Size: 3-4 fairly hungry bellies.

Cheap and Easy Veggie Stir-Fry

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large white onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 packages ramen noodles
- 1/2 cup sweet chili sauce (or make your own)
- 1/2 cup teriyaki sauce
- 1 cup veggie broth or 1 cup water and 1 tsp veggie bullion
- 1 package frozen mixed veggies (depending on preference, I prefer a mix of broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, baby corn, snow peas and red peppers)

In a stir-fry pan or skillet on medium low heat, sauté onions and garlic in 1 tbsp oil until the onions turn translucent.

Push the onions and garlic slightly to the side, add the other tbsp oil and heat for 30 seconds, then carefully add the package of frozen veggies, mixing in the onions and garlic.

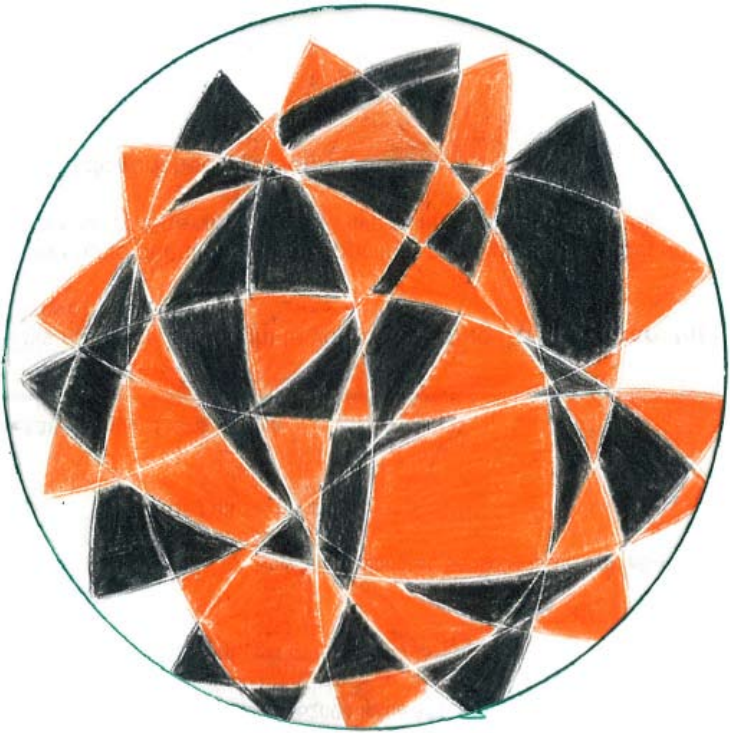
Cook on medium heat until tender, about 4 minutes

In a bowl mix together the veggie broth, chili sauce and teriyaki sauce.

Add mixture to veggies and bring to a boil.

Break ramen noodles in half and mix into the veggies. Cook on medium heat about 4 minutes or until noodles are tender.

Artwork by Anthony Williams



Cleo's Joke Corner



A cat died and went to heaven. He complained that he had to work too much. Then a mouse went by on roller skates. St. Peter said, “See? Meals on Wheels!”

Say What?!

“Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.”
- Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed

Stop Bleating, Start Barking

Nationalize the airlines and stop the whining

By DAVID HEITFIELD
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

“I’d rather be sniffed by a dog than endure a whole body scan by a man,” a woman said this morning on the *Diane Rehm Show*.

At first I thought, Freud’s eternal question, “What do women want?” had finally been answered. My mind engorged with thoughts of a certain librarian I know teaching this old dog some new tricks. But

further listening revealed the talk-show caller’s statement was simply more annoying yelping about how we should deal with potential terrorist attacks on airlines.

It’s annoying because I don’t hear anyone talking about the crux of the problem: The half-assed Christmas

bombing attempt of Delta’s Northwest Flight 253 by a lonely and unstable young man wearing women’s underwear is yet another example of the failure of our corporate welfare state.

Delta CEO Richard Anderson bemoaned the near tragedy, making the point that a for-profit company is in no way responsible for providing a safe and reliable product for its customers, nor should it suffer financial consequences for any failure of its business model. Sound familiar?

“We’re obviously disappointed,” Anderson said. “The things that have occurred over the last decade to this industry and the work we’ve done over the last decade ought to give us a better result than the peril that our crews and passengers faced on Christmas. ... You can be certain we will make our points very clearly in Washington.”

Let me make my point very clearly, Mr. Anderson. Shall we review your work over the past decade? You opportunistically took advantage of 9/11 to revive a failing business model (threatened by the likes of upstarts such as Southwest Airlines) through a \$15 billion taxpayer bailout of the airline industry, enacted less than *two weeks* after the World Trade Center tragedy. Not enough, in 2003 taxpayers gave your industry another \$3.2 billion. You filed bankruptcy, much like other giants in our corporate welfare state, a remedy largely available only to needy corporations, not needy individuals, thanks to more bipartisan lobbying efforts during the Bush years. You gutted pension plans, slashed pay so pilots and crew earn scarcely more money and respect than a greeter at Wal-Mart, charged people’s clothes to travel with them and bought yourself another airline.

Christopher Hitchens, the famed atheist whose amygdala won a successful coup attempt of his brain after 9/11 (his view that science is always good and religion has caused all the evil in the world is proven by the actions of the Council of Trent, which must have hatched the nefarious plan to drop a new bomb codenamed Fat Baby Jesus on Nagasaki), opined in *Slate* that the fault lies not only with “our endlessly incompetent security services” but with “public opinion that sheepishly bleats to be made to ‘feel safe.’ ” Take that, Brutus.

Hitchens conveniently ignores that our half-assed efforts to make the sheep feel safe is a compromise of trying to detect terrorist activity while not taking measures so obtrusive that they negatively impact the profits of the airline industry. Like the woman above, if sniffing dogs keep more customers flying than body scans, then that’s where we’ll go. And if for some reason we do go with body scans, who pays for the estimated \$100 billion cost? The American taxpaying sheep, of course. And when profits erode because the woman decides not to fly at all, we’ll help pump up the airlines’ coffers with more taxpayer money.

This Too Big to Fail corporate theocracy is untenable, and to be fair to my brethren on the right, the only critiques I’ve read against the taxpayer bailout of the airline industry after 9/11 came from the likes of *American Heritage* magazine, warning that we were headed down a bottomless rabbit hole. The Airlines Transportation Safety and System Stabilization Act passed in the House by a vote of 356-54 and a whopping 96-1 in the Senate. It seems corporate welfare is our only source of Congressional bipartisan support.

Transportation terrorism is hardly a new phenomenon. Railroads hired Pinkerton guards to deal with robbers back in the day. Stage-coach travel was fraught with risk. Shipping concerns still have to



A passenger removes his shoes as he places his belongings in a tray at a security checkpoint at Washington’s Ronald Reagan National Airport. *REUTERS/Larry Downing*.

What’s new is that any such failings of human character are now met with ransom demands on the American taxpayer, to provide a certainty that will never exist, except for the certainty that some corporate interest will reap rewards.

deal with pirates. When the economy tanks, carjackings increase. Just a few decades ago hijackings were commonly in the news. Archie Bunker once suggested that we stop hijackings by arming all the passengers – just pass out the guns as people board and collect them at the end of the flight. Amusingly, Congress included a provision in the recent transportation bill to allow Amtrak passengers to bring theirs on board. It appears that traveling at 35,000 feet in an aluminum tube with people packed like sardines breathing recycled air has some risk – who knew?

What’s new is that any such failings of human character are now met with ransom demands on the American taxpayer, to provide a certainty that will never exist, except for the certainty that some corporate interest will reap rewards.

While I’m certainly sympathetic to the ideas of the rational conservatives who argue we should always let these industries fail, that solution is political suicide in this climate of zero net job growth in the past decade and double-digit unemployment.

Which is why we should nationalize the airline industry. (I’d personally prefer to let it fail and invest in new rail travel, so we don’t fall a century behind the Chinese with their new cross-continent bullet trains.) If air travel were completely under the control of Homeland Security, we could take more stringent measures concerned with passenger safety without worrying about profit margins. We could guarantee every flight has at least an air marshal aboard. We could be more stringent in deciding who is allowed to board the plane. Hell, we could even treat pilots and crews to a little more pay and respect.

We just can’t afford to keep responding to fear with corporate welfare, be it financial institutions (free markets can only work when the middle-class subsidizes the rich), the defense industry (it’s OK to kill civilians, Blackwater; and it’s fine to gang-rape women, Halliburton – here, let’s give you some more taxpayer money, too), or the airlines. We need to bare our teeth and bark at these assholes, instead of tucking our tail and peeing in submission.

Why Martin Luther King Matters

Xavier University plans week of commemoration

By DAN ROZIER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

It is Martin Luther King Jr. Day today, an opportunity to reflect on how far we have come, the people who have lived, worked and died for racial equality and the actions necessary to maintain the momentum of our progress.

All next week (Jan. 18-22) Xavier University is hosting events that reflect King's legacy. Student groups from across the campus have banded together to provide lectures, art exhibits, films and a march and rally that are all free and open to the public. For a complete list of the events, times, locations and additional details visit www.xavier.edu/mlk.

"We must understand and appreciate our past in order to shape and change our future. Consequently, the graveness of the holiday is unchanged and will forever be a reminder of African Americans' struggle in this country as well as current motivation for growth."
- *Lundon Brown*

Relatively speaking, it could be argued that, in the past 50 years, the United States has made more progress in racial equality than any other nation. In just a half-century we have witnessed the fight for equality go from the streets of Birmingham to the Oval Office. With the election of Barack Obama in 2008, we watched affirmative action come to fruition, and overnight he was the personification of the American Dream. It wasn't just a victory for African Americans; it was a triumph of a nation, and for a fleeting moment, it seemed that "We shall Overcome" could be changed to "We have overcome."

Yes, we have come a long way; but in the midst of our success, we must not forget the history, the people and their passion that laid the foundation for such progress. Nor can we let it blind us from the progress that has yet to be made.

"We must understand and appreciate our past in order to shape and change our

future," says Lundon Brown, president of the Black Greek Society at Xavier University. "Consequently, the graveness of the holiday is unchanged and will forever be a reminder of African Americans' struggle in this country as well as current motivation for growth." Student leaders are adamant about creating and encouraging open dialogue about how King's legacy is still alive today, even though we have an African-American president.

"The historic election of President Barack Obama does not diminish the need to celebrate King's legacy," says Aaron Marble, a senior at Xavier University and president of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity. "Rather, it provides the opportunity to celebrate the legacy. Dr. King's impact and influence cannot

be lessened by any singular act, no matter its magnitude."

The Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity is one of 10 student and university organizations sponsoring Xavier's Martin Luther King Jr. events at Xavier next week.

"On the surface, our nation's election of an African-American president illustrates a society transcending racial injustice. However, with a critical eye, one still recognizes the institutional and systematic issues of race that still plague our great nation in areas of education, incarceration and poverty,"

Marble says.

For a complete list of the events, times, locations and additional details about events at Xavier University celebrating King's legacy, visit www.xavier.edu/mlk.



The grave of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. REUTERS/Tami Chappell.

To the editor:

I understand from an article in the *Cincinnati Enquirer* that the \$2,344 per year for a new class of liquor license for casinos equals the most expensive retail liquor license currently issued by the state, but I wonder how that peculiar figure was decided upon for existing retail liquor licenses for night clubs, etc.

More importantly, did anyone give any thought to factors such as (1) increased state income from "well oiled" gamblers and (2) balancing the incentive of casinos to give away free drinks with an opportunity for Ohio to profit much more by changing a considerably higher licensing fee? With so much potential for increased state earnings, simply repeating the odd \$2,344 fee seems very irresponsible from a fiscal standpoint. That's incredibly "small beer" in the casino world.

Four such licensed casinos in the state would earn Ohio a mere \$9,376 per year from the licenses, though the likely growth in profits of both casinos and the state from increased betting by drinkers would be many, many times that amount. If it's virtually certain that casino owners will want to give away free drinks, why doesn't Ohio be smart and charge them at least \$250,000 per casino site for the license? How could anyone be surprised that casino officials consider the negligible fee of \$2,344 to be "appropriate"?

Finally, if the state is going to profit from the dispensation of alcohol, let's have a good look at the Casino Control Commission's guidelines and possibly insist that everyone who plans to drive away from a casino site first passes a simple test to ensure they're under the legal blood-alcohol limit.

Robert A. Pohowsky
Madeira, Ohio

Have something
on your mind?

Let us know by
sending a letter to:

117 E. 12th Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

streetvibes2@yahoo.com

New Policy at the Drop Inn Center

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

are facing transition between housing and stay for less than a month, he says.

The center has 222 beds – 180 for men and 42 for women.

For chronically homeless people, the center offers case management to connect them with medical care, drug rehabilitation and employment, Clifford says. The center employs nine case managers, with five onsite and four offsite.

The Drop Inn Center has a dorm housing 120 people who need initial housing assistance. It also has a “step up” dorm with a capacity of 60. The requirements for that program are having employment, establishing a bank account, attending education classes and a willingness to volunteer to keep the center clean. The perks include a larger storage area for personal property and being surrounded by like-minded people seeking ways to improve their lives, Clifford says.

Since August 2009 the Drop

Inn Center has achieved a success rate of 60 to 65 percent in helping people find permanent housing, he says.

“We’re trying to raise the bar with no new increases in funding,” Clifford says. “The reorganization was budget-neutral. We invoked creativity, stole ideas from other shelters and listened to suggestions from residents and

“We’re trying to raise the bar with no new increases in funding. The reorganization was budget-neutral. We invoked creativity, stole ideas from other shelters and listened to suggestions from residents and staff. The feedback from staff, the community and residents has been very positive.”

- Pat Clifford

staff. The feedback from staff, the community and residents has been very positive.”

The Drop Inn Center regularly remains at full capacity, Clifford says. The center is orchestrating an interfaith collaboration to provide shelter once it reaches full capacity. Once the center is full, people still in need of shelter are directed toward organizations

such as the Cincinnati Chapter of the Saint Vincent DePaul Society.

“That’s why we advocate to be prepared in September to November for the winter,” Clifford says. “We don’t turn anyone away because of capacity. The result is some people have to sleep on the floor. To me, it’s a success story of collaboration.”

The Drop Inn Center requires people who come seeking help to show identification before being accepted into the shelter, Clifford says. The staff needs to know who is inside the building, he says. For someone who cannot provide state identification, the center will provide its own form of identification after being sure the person is not a sex offender, he says.

State law prevents former sex offenders from staying at the shelter because of its proximity to the new School for Creative and Performing Arts.

People who have been banned from the Drop Inn Center can use a grievance process by completing a reentry form available at the Drop Inn Center or at the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless.



The men's dorm at the Drop Inn Center prior to recent renovations. Photo by Andrew Anderson.

For more information about the Drop Inn Center, call 513-721-0643 or visit www.dropinn.org.

We Don't Understand, but Thanks

Victory doesn't have to make sense

By B. CLIFTON BURKE
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

At the beginning of the year, not many expected much from the ol' Bengals this season, and who could blame them?

They were fresh off a four-win season, they played in the toughest division in the NFL and had lost one of their stars, T.J. Houshmandzadeh, to free agency. Expectations were predictably lukewarm for their 2009 campaign.

Then the wins came, and the world was flabbergasted. For Bengal fans, skepticism turned into relief, which then turned into excitement and eventually morphed into elation. For such a hard-riden and long-suffering fan base as the Bengals', this season was something of a dream come true.

Sadly, however, there are still those who are far from satisfied with how things have turned out. Many lifelong fans remain highly critical of the team's direction and the style of play the organization has adopted. Either the run-first, defensive-minded mentality is not their preferred style of game, or the coaching staff's perceived unwillingness to stray from the script in any way contradicts their version

of common sense. In both cases, they ultimately go after Head Coach Marvin Lewis.

It seems incredible to me that Cincinnati hasn't taken to Marvin more. Before him, the team was completely lost at sea; inept in every way. Since then, they are 56-55-1, which is at least consistently visible from the shoreline. They have won the division twice in that stretch and have never finished last. While certainly not matching the kind of win totals with that of New England or Indianapolis, Marvin Lewis has the Cincinnati Bengals solidified within the ranks of league respectability – something many once considered out of reach for such a dismal organization.

I think one could make a good case for Lewis as the NFL Coach of the Year. Not only is he credited for the turnaround in wins, he's had to also redefine the culture that surrounds Bengals football. This team is now made up of professionals who can be expected to go about their business on and off the field in a levelheaded manner. Gone is the sideshow that came with all the dramatic divas of the past. The most made-for-TV of them all, Chad Ochocinco, remains with the Bengals, but even he is more serious about

his job this season than what he's demonstrated in years past.

Much was written about the emotional overload the team faced on a number of occasions. From the unexpected deaths of Chris Henry and Vikki Zimmer to the tsunamis in Samoa, Marvin has needed to be a friend and mentor instead of just a coach to his players. Yet in the face of all of that, not only has he kept the train on the track long enough to manage a winning season, his team swept the AFC North and now finds itself in the postseason.

Yes, he is steadfast to his philosophy even when it appears to go against reason, true he sometimes employs curious ways of clock-management and yes, I agree that there are flaws to his predictable nature, but for now, the man is winning, and I think it's about time the world recognizes that fact.

Plus, I don't see a replacement stepping in and immediately elevating this team to an even higher level. If anything, it would likely take time for a new coach to become entirely comfortable with his new team; and

frankly, I'm tired of starting over with new coaches, especially when the guy currently leading the pack is moving at a steady pace.

To all those expecting a quick post-season exit to justify your prolonged pessimism toward Marvin and his staff, you're missing the point: It's more fun when the team you're rooting for wins. If the man in charge continues to accomplish that task at the rate he's on, I see no reason to make a change.

Thanks, Marvin, and keep up the good work.

STREETVIBES
Vendor



MARY

Only purchase
Streetvibes
from BADGED
vendors.
Vendors wear
their WHITE
badges while
they sell the
paper.

A Chance to Celebrate

Adath Israel again benefits 'Streetvibes' vendors

By JENI JENKINS
STAFF WRITER

With the help of Adath Israel congregation, the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless (GCCH) held its annual *Streetvibes* vendor holiday party Dec. 21, 2009.

This celebration is an expression of appreciation for the dedicated vendors, a way to let them know how much we value their hard work and their commitment to spreading the word about homelessness.

The *Streetvibes* vendor program is designed to distribute news that educates the public about social justice issues in Cincinnati, as well as provide a source of income for

low-income and homeless or formerly homeless individuals. Last year 111 vendors distributed 54,027 copies of *Streetvibes*, which amounts to approximately \$40,520 in potential profit for our vendors.

Twenty-six vendors attended the party, enjoying a meal provided by members of Adath Israel. The spread included LaRosa's pasta and pizza as well as a few home-cooked dishes and home-made cookies. As they took in the food, the vendors relaxed to holiday music, enjoyed a sociable chat and read holiday cards handmade by chil-

dren from Adath Israel.

After the meal, vendors received gifts. Each vendor was individually "adopted" by families of Adath Israel, and some vendors received gifts for their spouses, children and grandchildren. One vendor, William Bussell, who joined our vendor team in October, received a brand new bike that he will use for selling *Streetvibes* in Northern Kentucky.

Thanks so much to Adath Israel for helping make our vendors' holiday party a success for the seventh year in a row.



Antonio Hodge poses for a picture.



Nelle Williams, *Streetvibes* vendor, waiting for gifts. Photos by Jeni Jenkins.



Cleo Wombles, *Streetvibes* vendor, is known for his clown costume.



James Brown shows off his t-shirt.



Vendors received gifts from Adath Israel congregation.

The Sorrow and the Pity

By SPENCER LEDYARD

My left kidney gave up,
Dislodged and died.
It was knocked loose by Sarai in an effort small
By comparison to what we had read:

Jews stampeding like beasts of burden from
Buna,
Freezing, starved, and it didn't stop on any ac-
count.
A sociopath might call it an evolutionary trek.
A humanist might call it credo. Night. It is called,
Night.

I am at a loss, two days later, in the
hospital.
I am a Catholic; "credo" comes into
my head readily
From the Nicene or the Apostle's
Creed.
In Latin it means literally "I be-
lieve."

In the dictionary it means a creed,
but I'm rambling.
It is nice to research etymology
rather than to feel
"At a loss" for what to call it. I turn
off the computer.
I am biting my eraser and my left
eye keeps twitching.

Sarai is Jewish and so good to me,
kidney be damned,
And we met in a sweet way, kissing
the first day,
And she brought me a good bunch
to eat here
And I read her a few short stories I

wrote earlier.

The first conversation we had was about Jewish
guilt
Because I had heard of it and thought it was a
myth,
Or a mythical being haunting some section of the
Torah
But she said it was one of those untranslatables:

Something understood thru years of context
clues,
And I felt like she was brushing me off.



President Obama listens to Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, author of *Night*.
REUTERS/Markus Schreiber.

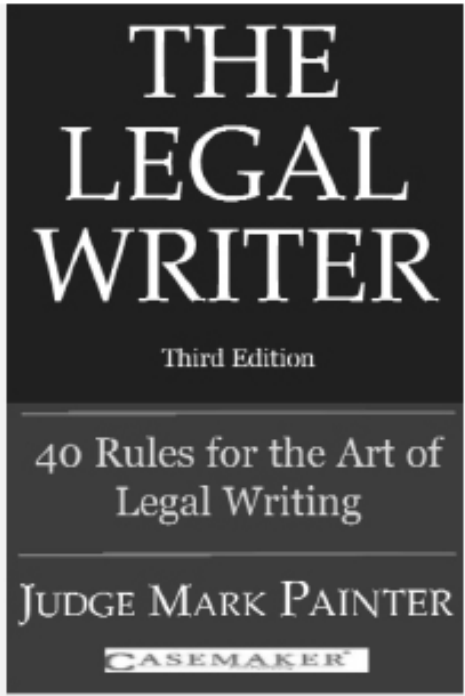
I told her that for gentiles, the ones I knew,
Jewish guilt was understood vicariously thru
Holocaust media.

She was not offended when I said this
But told me I was supposed to. I felt like Annie
Hall.
She said the guilt was a part of the community,
And that was part of it, being responsible to the
family.

We sat in the library, reading *Night*, side by side,
And when she finished first she walked behind
me,
Put her gray, sweated breasts on
my neck
And her arms around my chest
while I read on.

When I finished she said, "Take me
home, Matthew."
We rode the train holding hands like
father and son.
Tiny, she slammed me thru the door
of our apartment
And on to the bed and took the ache
out on me.

I love her but you already know that
and love feels small
Next to this guilt, pulling like fingers
against a noose,
Guilt that I can't say anything to
balm the brutality,
Guilt that this poem is never going
to be enough.



"Judge Painter's book is a classic in its field."
Joseph P. Tomain
Dean Emeritus
University of Cincinnati College of Law

"Every page of Judge Painter's book is dripping with insights
about how to improve your legal writing. There should be a new
malpractice claim for overlooking that advice."
Bryan A. Garner
Editor, *Black's Law Dictionary*
Author, *Garner's Modern American Usage*

"When I was Cleveland Law Director, we gave Judge Painter's
book to every lawyer in our office, and required our attorneys to
follow Judge Painter's '40 Rules.' Our writing immediately be-
came more effective and persuasive."
Subodh Chandra
The Chandra Firm

Buy yours at
<http://store.cincybooks.com>

Are you interested in helping
with *Streetvibes*?
Are you a proofreader, writer, poet, artist or
photographer? If so, contact
Greg Flannery
513.421.7803 x 12 or
email streetvibes2@yahoo.com

Interested in Advertising in Streetvibes?

AFFORDABLE RATES
MANY SIZES (full page, 1/2 page, 1/4 page, 1/8 page)
BLACK & WHITE AND COLOR AVAILABLE
DISCOUNTS FOR NONPROFITS

Contact Lynne at 513-421-7803 ext. 11
or lynneausman@cincihomeless.org
for more information.

Watch the Birdies, Pay Attention

They might tell you about ecological woes

By IDO LIVEN
STREET NEWS SERVICE

TEL AVIV, Israel – Ornithologists say that climate change is having a profound effect on bird behavior and suggest that this phenomenon can act as an early warning system to the dangers posed to Earth.

“The fact that birds are changing their behavior means that climate is changing already,” says Marco Lambertini, chief executive of Birdlife International (BI), a conservation federation working to protect birds and their habitats. “Birds are an excellent early warning system to what is happening to climate.”

Numerous studies have been tracking the effects of climate change on the survival, migration and reproduction of different bird species. As spring temperatures rise, the breeding of ficedula flycatcher has been delayed across Europe. The same reason was attributed to earlier breeding by tree swallows in North America and an opposite tendency in Antarctic sea birds.

“Some are winners, some are losers. Some species will expand, some species will run out of habitat,” said Lambertini, speaking with IPS on the sidelines of the annual Bird Watching Conference in Tel Aviv last month. “But it’s estimated that for each species that benefits, three species will be in trouble.”

While climate change related threats to human livelihood might seem clear, the other consequences for man

are not too obvious.

“We still need to consider the intrinsic value of nature, its spiritual, aesthetic, emotional and recreational values which are as important as its economic value,” said Lambertini.

“The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity,” a recently published study aimed at setting a price tag on Earth’s natural assets, considers the avian aspect. Insectivorous birds, according to the study, play an important role in crop production as they regulate insect pests.

“Maybe people are not aware of it, but the situation is quite acute,” says Prof. Marcel Visser, who heads the animal ecology department at the Netherlands Institute of Ecology. “There are already many species which are declining quickly,” he told IPS over telephone.

A study by Visser published last year found that 12 out of 24 European bird species studied have decreased their migration distances through the past 70 years.

“There’s always a lot of variation,” he says. “It’s not that all the species change in the same way.”

Another study conducted by Durham University scientists projects that by the end of the century nine out of the 17 European birds studied might actually be undertaking longer journeys northwards.

One key element is food availability. Alterations in weather patterns directly affect the timing of vegetation growth and the birds that feed on it or on the insects they eat. In many cases, bird migra-

tions are no longer synchronized with food abundance.

Other factors that are known to be challenging bird survival on land and sea include prey distribution and shrinking habitats.

“They need to adapt themselves,” says Yoram Yom-Tov of Tel Aviv University, who found some bird species in England to be changing their body weight. “Those who don’t adapt – their numbers decline, those who do – their numbers remain stable or even increase.”

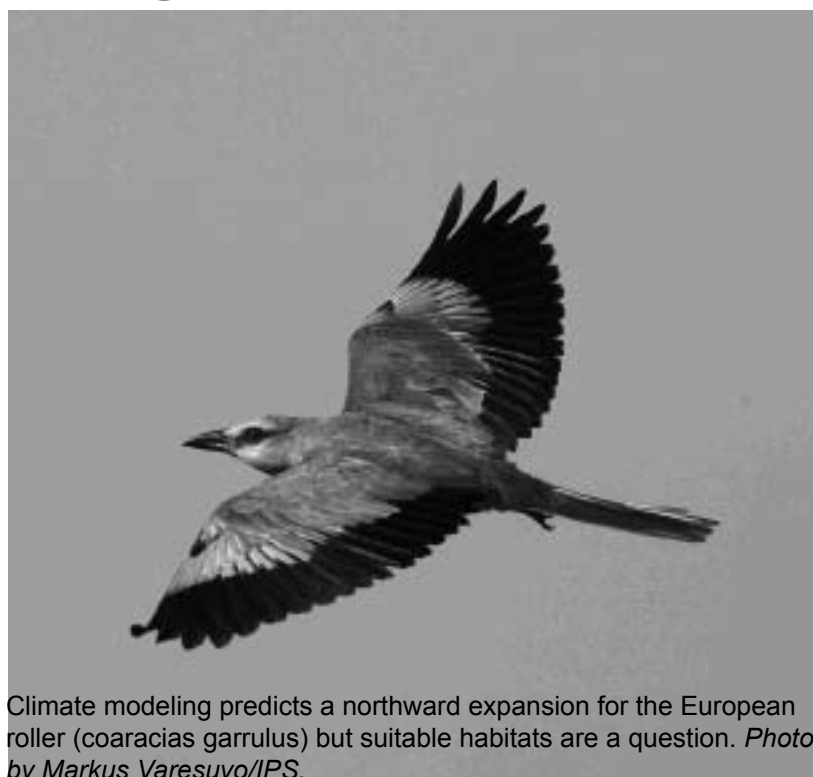
When it comes to projecting the risks birds face, ornithologists avoid numbers.

“It all depends on how our climate is going to change. If the temperature is going to rise by two degrees, the patterns will be different from when temperature rises by four degrees,” says Visser.

BI currently ranks climate change a distant ninth among the different threats to birds and issued a formal position on climate change only in June 2008.

“Some conservation movements – and BI is probably part of it – have woken up late to the challenge. But I think we are pretty much on course to fight it very hard,” Lambertini told IPS.

Conservation measures targeted at particular bird species are not the way to deal with the threat posed by climate change, says Visser.



Climate modeling predicts a northward expansion for the European roller (*coaracias garrulus*) but suitable habitats are a question. Photo by Markus Varesuvo/IPS.

“The only thing that can be done is reduce greenhouse gas emissions and make sure the temperature doesn’t increase by more than, say, one or two degrees,” he says.

BI – which has affiliates in more than 100 countries – believes that some mitigation measures are inappropriate.

“Badly placed wind farms, unsustainably produced bio-fuels and harmful irrigation and anti-flood measures are posing new threats and stresses on birds and their habitats, too,” a position paper by the organization says.

“We don’t object to wind farms. We want wind farms to be located in places which are not impacting biodiversity,” Lambertini says.

Similarly while sea-level rise poses a threat to both coastal human communities and low-lying ecosystems, inadequate barrier construction could put shore birds at risk.

“Flood defense is something that we have to do, but we support prevention rather than firefighting,” says Lambertini. “If we don’t tackle the root problem, we will need bigger and bigger defenses – it’s not feasible.”

A study published last year by researchers from three universities in Canada and the United States found that male mockingbirds in more variable climates sing more complex tunes.

Mockingbirds sing to attract mates, and the complexity of the chanting might indicate the quality of the singer. But although finer tunes are thought to help the feathered troubadours adapt better to harsher climes, the accelerating rate of change could mean the birds are singing their own requiem.

Courtesy of Inter Press Service.

© Street News Service: www.street-papers.org

Streetvibes is a newspaper that provides relevant discussions of homelessness, poverty and other related social justice issues

Badged vendors keep 75% of the profit of every paper sold



25% of each paper sold goes to printing and production

We rely on the kindness of our friends and readers to produce the paper each month.

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation today.

Please make checks payable to:
“Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless”
Mail to: 117 E. 12th Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Be sure to always purchase Streetvibes from a badged vendor.

1128 Walnut St
Pizza by the Slice

Lucy Blue

PIZZA

Tues and Thurs Buffet(\$7.00)-11AM-2PM
Wed-Thur-Fri-Sat 9PM-3AM

facebook

Become a Fan of *Streetvibes* on Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/streetvibescincinnati>

Need Help or Want to Help?

Shelter: Women and Children

Central Access Point	381-SAFE
Cincinnati Union Bethel	768-6907
300 Lytle Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Bethany House	557-2873
1841 Fairmount Ave, Cinti, Ohio 45214	
Grace Place Catholic Worker House	681-2365
6037 Cary Ave, Cinti, Ohio 45224	
Salvation Army	762-5660
131 E. 12th Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202	
YWCA Battered Women’s Shelter	872-9259

Shelter: Men

City Gospel Mission	241-5525
1419 Elm Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Justice Watch	241-0490
St. Fran/St. Joe Catholic Work. House	381-4941
1437 Walnut Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Mt. Airy Shelter	661-4620

Shelter: Both

Anthony House (Youth)	961-4080
2728 Glendora Ave, Cinti, Ohio 45209	
Caracole (HIV/AIDS)	761-1480
1821 Summit Road, Cinti, Ohio 45237	
Drop Inn Center	721-0643
217 W. 12th Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Interfaith Hospitality Network	471-1100
Lighthouse Youth Center (Youth)	221-3350
3330 Jefferson, Cinti, Ohio 45220	

Housing:

CMHA	721-4580
Excel Development	632-7149
OTR Community Housing	381-1171
114 W. 14th Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Tender Mercies	721-8666
27 W. 12th Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Tom Geiger House	961-4555
Dana Transitional Bridge Services	751-0643
Volunteers of America	381-1954

Food/Clothing

Lord’s Pantry	621-5300
OTR/Walnut Hills Kitchen & Pantry	961-1983
OTR: 1620 Vine Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Walnut Hills: 2631 Gilbert, Cinti, Ohio 45206	
Our Daily Bread	621-6364
1730 Race Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202	
St. Francis Soup Kitchen	535-2719

Churches Active in Northside	591-2246
4230 Hamilton Ave, Cinti, Ohio 45223	
FreeStore/FoodBank	241-1064
112 E. Liberty Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Madisonville Ed & Assistance Center	271-5501
3600 Erie Ave, Cinti, Ohio 45227	
St. Vincent de Paul	562-8841
1125 Bank Street, Cinti, Ohio 45214	

Treatment: Men

Charlie’s 3/4 House	784-1853
2121 Vine Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202	
DIC Live In Program	721-0643
Prospect House	921-1613
682 Hawthorne Ave, Cinti, Ohio 45205	
Starting Over	961-2256

Treatment: Women

First Step Home	961-4663
2203 Fulton, Cinti, Ohio 45206	

Treatment: Both

AA Hotline	351-0422
CCAT	381-6672
830 Ezzard Charles Dr. Cinti, Ohio 45214	
Joseph House (Veterans)	241-2965
1522 Republic Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Hamilton County ADAS Board	946-4888
Recovery Health Access Center	281-7422
Sober Living	681-0324
Talbert House	641-4300

Advocacy

Catholic Social Action	421-3131
Community Action Agency	569-1840
Contact Center	381-4242
1227 Vine Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Franciscan JPIC	721-4700
Gr. Cinti Coalition for the Homeless	421-7803
117 E. 12th Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Intercommunity Justice & Peace Cr.	579-8547
Legal Aid Society	241-9400
Ohio Justice & Policy Center	421-1108
Faces Without Places	363-3300
Stop AIDS	421-2437

Health

Center for Respite Care	621-1868
3550 Washington Ave, Cinti, Ohio 45229	

Crossroad Health Center	381-2247
5 E. Liberty St. Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Health Resource Center	357-4602
Homeless Mobile Health Van	352-2902
McMicken Dental Clinic	352-6363
40 E. McMicken Ave, Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Mental Health Access Point	558-8888
Mercy Franciscan at St. John	981-5800
1800 Logan St. Cinti, Ohio 45202	
NAMI of Hamilton County	458-6670
PATH Outreach	977-4489

Other Resources

Center Independent Living Options	241-2600
Emmanuel Community Center	241-2563
1308 Race St. Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Peaslee Neighborhood Center	621-5514
214 E. 14th St. Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Franciscan Haircuts from the Heart	381-0111
1800 Logan St. Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Goodwill industries	771-4800
Healing Connections	751-0600
Mary Magdalen House	721-4811
1223 Main St. Cinti, Ohio 45202	
People Working Cooperatively	351-7921
The Caring Place	631-1114
United Way	211
Women Helping Women	977-5541

Hamilton/Middletown

St. Raephaels	863-3184
Salvation Army	863-1445
Serenity House Day Center	422-8555
Open Door Pantry	868-3276

Northern Kentucky

Brighton Center	859-491-8303
799 Ann St. Newport, KY	
ECHO/Hosea House	859-261-5857
Fairhaven Resuce Mission	859-491-1027
Homeward Bound Youth	859-581-1111
Mathews House	859-261-8009
Homeless & Housing Coalition	859-727-0926
Parish Kitchen	859-581-7745
Pike St. Clinic	859-291-9321
Transitions, Inc	859-491-4435
Welcome House of NKY	859-431-8717
205 West Pike Street, Covington, KY 41011	
Women’s Crisis Center	859-491-3335
VA Domiciliary	859-559-5011
VA Homeless	859-572-6226

Go Ahead: Ask a Vendor

Invitation to a dialogue with our readers

Streetvibes vendors see a lot that you might not. For example, some can describe what goes on in an abandoned building at night when they sleep there.

Have you ever wondered what it’s like to stand on a street corner selling newspapers? That’s hardly a common occupation anymore.

How much money do *Streetvibes* vendors make – and what do they do with it? Do they have other jobs?

If you have questions, some of our vendors would like to answer them. “Go Ahead: Ask a Vendor” will be an occasional feature, with questions submitted by readers and answered by *Streetvibes* vendors.

You may direct your question to a specific vendor or we’ll invite one to respond. Only include your name if you want to.

Send questions to streetvibes2@yahoo.com
Or to *Streetvibes*, 117 E. 12th St. Cincinnati, Ohio 45202.

Go ahead. Ask.

A Call to Greater Cincinnati Poets

Write for ‘For a Better World 2010’

It’s time to get your verse on.

SOS Art, the annual exhibit of art on themes of peace and justice, publishes a collection of poetry each year. Saad Ghosn, who organizes SOS Art and writes the “Artists as Activists” column for *Streetvibes*, is now collecting submissions for *For a Better World 2010*, the seventh edition to date.

Any poet from or connected to Greater Cincinnati may submit up to three poems related to themes of peace and justice. All submissions will be considered. The editors will be looking for quality, inclusiveness and appropriateness to the themes of peace and justice.

If space becomes limited, priority will go to poets not published in previous books. The poems selected for publication will be illustrated in black and white by Greater Cincinnati artists. Poets included in the book will be invited to read their poems at SOS Art 2010.

For a Better World 2010 will be released in May 2010. The deadline for submissions is Feb. 15, 2010.

Send submissions as “Word” attachments or in full text
By e-mail to saad.ghosn@uc.edu or
On a CD to Saad Ghosn, 216 Erkenbrecher Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45229.

Power of Uncomfortable Art

Kurt Storch's painting
advocates mental health

“I am a regular guy, husband, and father,” says Kurt Storch. “I am OK with being me, but it has not always been that way. Fear and self-loathing marked much of my early life.”

Storch, a visual artist, has suffered from clinical depression since his early childhood. When he was 2 years old, he discovered crayons, coloring books and Play-Doh and used them as an immediate means to express himself and find respite from the torments of his condition.

He did not, however, become serious about art until in his mid-30s when, going through a serious depressive episode and heavily self-medicated, he tried to take his own life. Luckily, he did not proceed all the way, sought medical help and actively started confronting his situation. One of the decisions he made then was to pursue an art career.

Storch attended the Academy of Communicative Arts in Cincinnati, graduated with a degree in design and illustration and worked for several years as a commercial artist. This, however, did not satisfy him. Doing work for others was taking him away from his own needs and connecting him more with his underlying anger. He found himself slipping more into depression and decided to quit.

Storch did not do art for several years afterwards. He later got progressively back into it, focusing more on himself, discovering a new spiritual dimension to his creativity. His works during that period consisted of a series of assemblaged boxes, subconsciously executed;

they talked to him after the fact and opened a road to his psyche, connecting him to his ego. They also addressed several social and political issues that preoccupied him: gun violence, the role the AK 47 plays in modern society, the indiscriminate targeting of black males by the police, the distorted vision of

God and Judeo-Christian symbols by Western civilization.

His art had become mostly process-oriented, away from the commodifiable, sellable product. It was helping him sort out his issues, unravel and express the alienation he was going through, assert himself and find his voice. Unfortunately, Storch quickly discovered



Kurt Storch standing next to his painting, *Oh Happy Girl*.
Photo by Bill Howes.

that society did not easily accept mental illness, that it was frightened by it and rarely knew how to deal with it. His condition kept him isolated, losing friends and job opportunities; it also prevented him from sharing his works with others.

Two years ago Storch met Barbara Gamboa, a local visual artist who was using her art to combat her own post-traumatic stress disorder. Gamboa got him to show his work and encouraged him to fight through his art the stigma of mental disease. She involved him in *Hope and Strength Through Art*, an exhibit she was curating at the time, sponsored by the Mental Health Arts Collaborative. The exhibit connected him to many other professional and non-professional artists who, like he, were suffering from mental illness. Through artists' talks, they all shared their personal trials and tribulations with the disease, telling their own story. For Storch, it was an empowering experience, one that opened new horizons and made him determined to become an activist for the cause of mental wellness.

“I started using my art as a metaphor for spiritual awareness to help myself and others who suffer and are stigmatized by mental illness,” he says. “I wanted my work to make a comment about my own condition as well as that of others. The creative process can also help anyone realize what is going on inside and find a therapeutic outlet.”

Storch is now very active in raising awareness about mental illness and the stigma it places on the individual, self-inflicted or imposed by society. He shows his related work whenever the opportunity presents and gives talks on the subject, sharing his own experience. He was recently invited to display his works at a seminar featuring a psychiatrist who had written a book on the topic.

Manic Depression, one of the paintings Storch exhibited, pertained to the brain-diseased mind and its implications to the individual. It shows two frightened and distraught faces of a woman with the words “manic depression” written on them; also a brain depicted upside-down, an airplane falling, metaphor for despair, and an anatomical picture of a man cut in half, allegory to the way mentally ill individuals often view themselves.

Storch also added the image of Groucho Marx because Marx had said, “I would not want to be a member of any club that would have me as a member” – a statement many mentally ill people would also make. To personalize the piece, Storch incorporated in it the brushes he used to paint it, thus reflecting on his own creative process and on the process of the disease itself; he also signed it “CC,” for Cody Cavanaugh, the alias name of a “female consciousness” that allows him to expand his dimension and speak not only from the standpoint of a man but of that of a universal being espousing the entire humanity.

In *Oh Happy Girl*, another painting he displayed, Storch put a face on the anger many mentally afflicted individuals experience, anger that often leads to uncontrollable violence. He represented the face of a furious woman wearing a voodoo hat, next to an image of many hearts alluding to the various conflicting emotions she might have, depending on the day.

For Storch, art now has an explainable purpose. It helps him reach self-realization and allows him to loudly convey his messages and raise awareness about mental illness. He also uses it to bring mentally afflicted individuals in contact with their own healing creativity.

“I consider my art successful if it makes a statement rather than simply being a vehicle for something only pretty,” he says. “It’s not commodifiable anymore. I want it to trigger a dialogue with the viewer where the stigma of mental illness becomes evident and uncomfortable.”

Artists as Activists

By SAAD GHOSN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER



Manic Depression, painting by Kurt Storch.
Photo by Kurt Storch.